

EDDY'S SEARCH; A Brave Boy's Battle.

DR. BULLET'S "PRIVATE RETREAT."

It was early in June, 1851. In one of the small, neatly-furnished rooms of good Mrs. Brierly's boarding-house, Poughkeepsie, was seated our hero, Eddy Burns.

He was a fair and handsome lad, fifteen years of age, with bright blue eyes, a noble forehead, fair hair, and resolute mouth. He was a brave boy first in his class at school, and distinguished for his generosity and kindness of heart.

His home was at Riverton, some miles further up the river, but he was a student at Poughkeepsie, and it was now several weeks since he had seen his home and his mother.

His geography lay unheeded on his knees as he wove his boyish plans—how he would achieve wealth and fame and make his mother proud of him.

"Not know you, sir?" "No. And she flew at Dr. Bullet also."

"Then there was no positive cause for this sudden attack, sir?" "None, unless the sight of the house to which she fled, and the thought of her father, who was in the room."

"It is not true that I had a letter from mother," he exclaimed. "One is from her. Who can have written the other? I'll read mother's first, any how."

"I'll just play to hear if Mrs. Burns is well," remarked Mrs. Brierly. "How she is!"

The boy tore open the smaller of the two envelopes, and hurriedly perused his mother's letter.

And as he read the glow faded from his face, the smile from his lips. He read the letter to his close, and looked up at Mrs. Brierly with an expression of unutterable grief.

"What is it, Eddy?" she questioned anxiously. The lad replied only by a moan.

"Dear Dr. Bullet," cried Mrs. Brierly. Eddy shook his head.

"Not dead," he sobbed, "but it's almost the same. You can read the letter, Mrs. Brierly. Oh, my mother! my mother!"

He sobbed aloud. Mrs. Brierly caught up the letter from the floor to which it had fallen.

It ran as follows:— "RIVERTON ON HUDSON, June 10, 1851. "MY DARLING SON—You must have wondered that I have not written you more frequently than usual. I am about to write you more frequently than usual."

"Three years ago your father and I were the happiest couple in Riverton. We lived in our own house, a pretty little villa overlooking the river, and your father and I were very happy."

"About the time of my husband's illness, the California gold excitement became a fever in our vicinity. A successful miner returned to Riverton from the land of gold, and far days a portion of his wealth was deposited in our bank."

"Well, what was wanted?" demanded this person roughly. "I wish to see Dr. Bullet," replied Eddy.

"He's got no time to waste on boys." The keeper made a movement to shut the door in Eddy's face. As quick as a flash the boy slipped across the threshold and into the hall.

"Tell Dr. Bullet I desire to see him," he said coolly. "I shall stay here until I do see him. You can give him my name—Edward Burns."

"Burns, eh? Well, I'll tell the Doctor. Seeing you're inside, you can step into the reception room."

He closed, bolted and barred the outer door, and silently ushered Eddy into a small, dreary waiting-room at one side of the hall. He then hurried away in quest of the Doctor.

Nearly half an hour elapsed before any one appeared. Now and then a muffled shriek or long-drawn moan reached his ears.

Unable to bear longer the suspense of waiting, he touched a bell-pull and rang a loud peal, the jangle of which reached even his ears.

The noise had scarcely died away when a pompous, portly personage entered the waiting-room.

Eddy recognized him at first glance as Dr. Bullet. He was a hard-faced man, past middle age, with keen eyes, a low forehead, a cleanly shaven face, rendered peculiarly unpleasant by a sanctimonious expression which contrasted strangely with his sinister features.

The doctor had formerly kept a private insane asylum in New Jersey, but he had fallen into an ill-repute, and it having been proved against him that some people had been incarcerated in his gloomy institution, he had been obliged to abandon that field of operations, and had re-established his asylum at Riverton on the Hudson. He had now been at Riverton some years, and was regarded in the village as an upright and honorable man, having, it seemed, lost his former reputation behind him when he changed his residence.

"Ah, Eddy Burns!" exclaimed the Doctor, in his mild, bland voice, extending his hand. "How do you do, Eddy? How you grow! Glad to see you, my fine fellow."

"I am here, mother," he said. "Don't cry out, or someone will hear us."

He crept nearer to her, and pressed his face against the bars, his cheek touching hers.

"She caught at Eddy's hand; she kissed his quivering lips, and she whispered, 'I never expected to see you again.'"

"Dear mother!" said Eddy. "You might have known I would come to you if I had taken you to Madagascar!"

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"My judgment must decide the matter, Master Burns," said the Doctor stillly. "I beg your pardon, Doctor," said Eddy, humbly enough; "but I beg you to let me look in upon her through the grating at her door. I will speak a word. Only let me see her once more!"

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Eddy felt insulted, but he could not abandon his project without a last endeavor to effect it. "I am only a boy, Dr. Bullet," he said, "but I know there must be some one in the land more powerful than you, who can permit me to see my mother. I will see a lawyer—"

"That is big talk for a boy of your size!"

"I told you to remain at Poughkeepsie till your school term closed," began Mr. Burgoyne irritably. "I know you did, sir," returned Eddy respectfully. "But my mother is in trouble."

"Sit down, boy. I can see that the news has been a shock to you," said Mr. Burgoyne, in a more affable tone. "You cannot imagine how I have suffered!"

Eddy's heart softened towards him. "I am only a boy, Doctor," said Eddy at last, sorrowfully, "but I have a grave look in my eyes, and I have a man's courage. You may hear from me again."

He bowed gravely and went out. With a heavy heart, he moved down the gravelled walk towards the gate.

He was determined not to abandon his mother, let her madness be as dangerous as it might, but how could he compass his object?

He had nearly reached the iron gates, and was musing with a forlorn look when he looked back at the grim asylum. No one was looking out at him.

Taking advantage of the opportunity thus afforded, Eddy slipped into a by-path, and sought the shelter of some shrubbery near the wall. Here he hung himself upon the ground, to wait patiently the coming of darkness.

It was now about six o'clock of the long summer afternoon. How the twilight lingered! Eddy, peering out, saw one after another the great iron gates at an early hour, but the old town clock at Riverton had struck the hour of ten before the lights and the noises died out of the asylum.

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"Can it be she is not up there?" thought the boy, a cold sweat starting to his brow. "Can she be snuggled up in a nook?"

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The grounds were separated from the road by a high stone wall. The house—square, three stories in height, built of red brick, and lighted within by narrow, grated windows—was some distance from the road, in the midst of a small pine grove, which screened the asylum from the glance of casual passers-by.

The double iron gates were open upon this bright June afternoon, and Eddy passed unchallenged into the grounds, and, with a sinking heart, he ascended the steps of the high porch and rang the door-bell loudly.

Presently the bolts securing the door upon the inner side withdrew, and a coarse-looking fellow, one of the keepers of the institution evidently, presented himself.

"Well, what was wanted?" demanded this person roughly. "I wish to see Dr. Bullet," replied Eddy.

"He's got no time to waste on boys." The keeper made a movement to shut the door in Eddy's face. As quick as a flash the boy slipped across the threshold and into the hall.

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meered the Doctor. "Your mother was committed to my asylum in accordance with the law made and provided for such cases. Any lawyer will tell you that no one can give you a permit to see a mad woman, when her physician declares she must be secluded!"

Eddy felt the hopelessness of his case. He had no powerful friends—no money. And he felt sure that Mr. Burgoyne and Dr. Bullet were his enemies, and that some terrible mystery was connected with his mother.

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FROM WALKER STREET DEPOT. At 7 A. M., Mail and Accommodation, via Camden and Amboy, and at 8:30 P. M., Accommodation, via Camden and Jersey City.

At 12 and 6 P. M., for Amboy and intermediate stations. At 7 A. M. and 3:30 P. M. for Freehold and Farmington.

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